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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 001004

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: ABU GHREIB COUNCIL MEMBERS COMPLAIN ABOUT
SECURITY AND LACK OF REPRESENTATION

Classified By: BAGHDAD PRT LEADER JOE GREGOIRE FOR
REASONS 1.4 (B)
AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. On March 23 IPAmet with five members of the Abu Ghreib Qada Council and the Abu Ghreib Chief of Police to discuss issues including security and other issues. Council members complained of lack of support and representation from the Baghdad Provincial Council (BPC). They also complained about terrorist activity in their qada (district) and a perceived lack of security patrols in their communities. The police chief also talked about his efforts to improve the performance of his police forces. IPAmet briefed the council members on initiatives to improve communication and representation between the Baghdad Provincial Council and sub-governorate councils. The members requested and IPAmet agreed that more communication is needed between the councils and the Baghdad Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT). END SUMMARY.

LOW TURNOUT

¶2. (C) Baghdad Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) IPAmet with members of the Abu Ghreib Qada Council and Commander of the Abu Ghreib Police General Kareem Mahmoud. Only four members of the council participated in the meeting held at the Al-Mansour District Advisory Council (DAC) Building. Turnout was low because roads in and out of Abu Ghreib had been closed because of security risks and all council members were not able to drive to the Al-Mansour. Meetings have been held in Al-Mansour because the Abu Ghreib Council no longer has a building (it has been destroyed two times by terrorist attacks). Also, due to attacks on council members in Abu Ghreib Qada, the members have found it safer to meet in Al-Mansour.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

¶3. (C) The members were quick to tell IPAmet that some of the biggest problems they are encountering are the lack of representation and communication with the Baghdad Provincial Council (BPC). IPAmet assured the members that the BPC and PRT are taking steps to resolve these problems. A briefing informed the members about the initiative to increase communication and coordination

between the BPC and sub-governorate councils (SGC) through the BPC committees. BPC committees have begun to meet with the respective SGC committees to discuss health, human rights, agriculture, economic development, security, and religious affairs. (Comment: The BPC Health Committee has already held a meeting with all SGC Health Committee Members. The Economic and Human Rights Committees will meet next week. End Comment.) The Abu Ghreib local council members welcomed the initiative and said they are eager to participate.

SECURITY THE BIGGEST PROBLEM

14. (C) Members complained the biggest problem in their qada is security. Sheikh Adel Heratt, Chairman of the Qada Security Committee, declared that the qada needs more security assistance from the police, Iraqi Army, and Coalition Forces. He spoke of terrorists roaming the qada freely with little concern about detection or capture. He spoke of being the target of numerous attacks. Kareem also produced five threat letters warning that he will be killed if he doesn't leave his home and the qada. The fifth letter was labeled the final warning. He also complained of trying to protect his family, but having U.S. Army forces raid his home and confiscate all of his weapons, leaving him and his family with no protection. The sheikh demanded more patrols to protect the residents of the qada. Sheikh Adel, who lives in one of the more remote areas of the qada, noted he seldom sees any police patrols. IPAQ was informed the police are undermanned in Abu Ghreib and do not have the resources

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to patrol every area as thoroughly as is necessary. General Kareem reported there are only three police stations in Abu Ghreib.

MORE POLICE ON THE WAY

15. (C) Additional resources are being made available to the police in the qada. General Kareem told members he had asked the Interior Minister for 500 more policemen in Abu Ghreib, and the minister has approved the request. Kareem informed the group there are also plans to build more police stations in the qada. However, he expects to encounter problems meeting his recruitment goal of 500 police officers. In the past the general attempted to recruit in the area with little success. He said the problem was fear of reprisals against families with members in the police force and of additional attacks on police stations. When IPAQ asked for group comment on performance of the police, none was given. (Comment: No direct criticism was given about the police but that seemed because Kareem was present. In overall discussions about security the police were indirectly accused of being just as ineffective as the Iraqi Army and U.S. Army in stopping insurgent attacks. End Comment.)

NO PROBLEM WITH DISPLACED PERSONS

16. (C) IPAQ asked the members if they had any knowledge of approximately 100 displaced Shia families in Abu Ghreib. (Comment: IPAQ had received reports there were up to 100 Shia families being forced out of their homes by threats of violence. End Comment.) Council members and the police

chief all denied knowledge of displaced Shia families or threats against them. However, in numerous phone conversations with chairman of the council, Hamed Al-Amery, IPAO was told there were cases of Shia families being threatened and some who had left their homes. Hamed was unable to attend the meeting due to insecurity and road closures in Abu Ghreib.

COMMENT

17. (C) This was the IPAO's first meeting with members of the Abu Ghreib Council. Their primary worry, like every sub-governorate council in Baghdad, is security. They were concerned about insurgent groups being allowed to operate almost without reprisal in the outlying qadas of the province. This qada council feels neglected by the Embassy, unrepresented by the BPC, and forgotten by the armies which it feels are supposed to protect them. Establishment of the Baghdad PRT should help alleviate some of their concerns. The PRT has identified a liaison officer to work directly with the council and BPC Committee initiatives should improve communication. IPAO has coordinated a visit to the qada council, police headquarters, and some surrounding communities next week. END COMMENT.
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